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REMARKS

This Response is filed in response to the Office Action mailed October 26, 2001. Claims 1 to 24 were pending in this application. Claims 1 to 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 have been amended to more clearly define the present invention. Claims 11, 14, 16, 18 and 24 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New Claims 25 to 36 have been added to more clearly define the present invention. The specification has been amended. No new matter has been added in these amendments. A supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith for consideration. A one-month petition for Extension of Time is submitted herewith. Checks in the amount of \$740.00 and \$180.00 are submitted herewith to cover the cost of the petition for Extension of Time, the additional claims included in this Response and for consideration of the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for any insufficiency.

Claims 1 to 3 and 5 to 24 were rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by U.S. Patent No. 6,089,977 to Bennett ("Bennett"). Claim 4 was rejected as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of Bennett and U.S. Patent No. 5,823,873 to Moody ("Moody").

In the personal interview courteously granted Applicants' representatives on December 4, 2001, the Examiners and Applicants' representatives discussed ways to overcome the rejection of Claims 1 to 24. Applicants explained the differences between the present invention and Bennett. Applicants respectfully submit that the amended Claims and new Claims are patentably distinguished over Bennett and the other prior art of record.

More specifically, amended Claim 1 is directed to a method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols. The method includes the steps of maintaining a list of award-yielding symbol combinations of the plurality of symbols in a controller, randomly generating a first set of the symbols from the plurality of symbols, and providing an award for each award-yielding symbol combination appearing in the first set. The method further includes selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set for replacement and replacing each said selected symbol in the first set with one of the plurality of symbols to generate a second set of the symbols, and providing

an award for each award-yielding symbol combination appearing in the second set regardless of whether the award-yielding symbol combination in the second set appeared in the first set. Bennett, on the other hand, only provides awards for combinations including the changed symbol in the second award evaluation. Bennett at column 3, lines 47 to 51 states:

As the PENGUIN moves to each of these symbols the symbol changes to a PENGUIN then changes back to the original symbol as the PENGUIN moves on to the next symbol and pays each winning combination in which the PENGUIN substitutes. [Emphasis added.]

Bennett teaches only paying for combinations that include the substituted symbol. Bennett does not teach paying for each winning combination that appears on the screen regardless of whether the award yielding combination in the second set of symbols appeared in the first set of symbols.

Figures 14A and 14B of the present application further illustrate one of the patentable distinctions between the claimed invention and Bennett. On page 27, line 15, the present application states:

In the first step of the evaluation, the player wins 50 credits for obtaining three cherry symbols along payline 56a. The game then replaces each "7" with a heart symbol, which results in the screen of Fig. 14B.

In the second step evaluation, the player again wins 50 credits for obtaining three cherry symbols along the payline 56a, 100 credits for the heart-heart-cherry combination on reels 34a, 34b and 34c of payline 56b and 10 more credits for the heart-heart combination on reels 34b and 34c and payline 56c. [Emphasis added.]

In the present invention, the gaming device pays for the three cherries appearing along the payline 56a of Figure 14A before any symbol replacement occurs. The gaming device subsequently again pays for the three cherries appearing along the payline 56a in Figure 14B even though no symbols along that payline have been replaced. The game additionally pays for new winning combinations appearing along paylines 56b and 56c due to the replacement of each "7" by a heart symbol.

The above example of the present invention is contrasted by an example in Bennett appearing at column 4, line 47 to column 5, line 43. In the first sequence or illustration of this example which begins at column 4, line 52 and proceeds to column 4,

line 58, Bennett discloses that a WHALE symbol appearing three times anywhere on the display provides a winning result. In the remaining six sequences, Bennett discloses that the gaming device pays only along paylines that include a PENGUIN symbol that systematically and sequentially replaces symbols according to a predetermined pattern. Therefore, in the six subsequent sequences, the Bennett game does not pay for the winning combination of three of a kind scattered WHALE symbols even though the combination appears in each of the six sequences.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Bennett teaches paying for combinations that include a substituted symbol, whereas amended Claim 1 includes providing an award for each award-yielding symbol combination that appears in the set of symbols before replacement (i.e., the first set) and after one or more but not all of the symbols are replaced (i.e., the second set), regardless of whether the award-yielding symbol combination includes the replaced symbol.

Additionally, during the personal interview, free spins of the entire set of reels and re-spins of certain reels were discussed. Free spins involve spinning the reels a second, third, fourth time, etc., and providing awards for new winning combinations occurring from each free spin. Free spins involve regenerating each and every displayed symbol. In re-spins, only certain reels are respun to generate new displayed symbols. Each of the embodiments disclosed in the present invention discloses individually replacing less than all of the symbols such as a single selected symbol (Fig. 5A), the selected symbols in a column (Fig. 5B), the selected symbols in a row (Fig. 7B), the selected symbols in a column and row (Fig. 10B) but not all of the symbols. Accordingly, step (d) of Claim 1 includes selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set for individual replacement. This clearly patentably distinguishes the claimed invention over free spins and re-spins. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 1 and Claims 2 to 10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 and new Claims 25 and 26 that depend therefrom are each patentably distinguished over the art of record and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 17 is directed to a method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols. The method includes the steps of maintaining in a controller a list of award yielding symbol combinations of the plurality of symbols,

generating a set of the symbols, wherein one of the symbols in the set is a first wild symbol, and providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in the set including the generated wild symbol which functions as one of the other symbols to maximize the award yielding combinations. The method further includes selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the set except for the first wild symbol in the set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol with a second wild symbol, and providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in the set, including the wild symbols which replace other symbols and function as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations. Bennett does not disclose, teach or suggest performing each of the steps disclosed in amended Claim 17. As stated above, the game of Bennett does not generate a set of symbols wherein one of the symbols is a wild symbol as in amended Claim 17. Rather, Bennett generates a set of symbols and if the symbols contain a particular combination, a PENGUIN symbol appears and replaces certain symbols in the set. (See column 3, lines 35 to 38). Also, Bennett does not disclose, teach or suggest replacing one or more symbols in the set and providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in the set after the individual wild symbol replacement. As discussed above, Bennett discloses only providing awards for combinations that include the PENGUIN symbol, not for the symbol combinations that do not include the PENGUIN symbol. Amended Claim 17 includes generating a wild symbol along with other symbols and then individually replacing at least one but not all of the other symbols with another wild symbol. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 17 and Claim 19 to 22 and new Claims 27 and 28 that depend therefrom are each patentably distinguished over the art of record and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claim 23 is directed to a gaming device including a plurality of playing cards. The method includes the steps of maintaining in a controller of the gaming device a list of award yielding playing card combinations, generating a set of playing cards, wherein one of the playing cards in the set is a wild card, and providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination appearing in the set including the generated wildcard which functions as one of the cards to maximize the award

yielding combinations is the set. The method further includes selecting at least one but not all of the cards in the set except for said wildcard for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected playing card with another wildcard, and providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination in the set including the wildcards which function as one of the playing cards to maximize the award yielding combinations. Bennett does not disclose, teach or suggest each of the limitations contained in amended Claim 23. Bennett does not disclose generating a set of playing cards wherein one of the playing cards is a wildcard as in Claim 23. Rather, Bennett at column 5, lines 43-46 discloses:

When applied to a draw poker machine, the feature might be invoked, for example by an ace in the first card position and a club suit in the last card position.

Therefore, like in the slot embodiment, a particular combination of cards invokes the additional "WILD" symbol. Bennett then goes on to say:

The special feature symbol (equivalent to the PENGUIN in the previous embodiment) would then be displayed sequentially in each card position and act as a wild card in combination with the remaining cards of the hand. A prize is awarded for each new winning combination created by the wild card.

Therefore, the game of Bennett does not generate a set of playing cards wherein one of the playing cards is wild card. Bennett does not teach providing an award for each winning playing combination appearing in the set. Bennett, rather, states at column 5, lines 52 to 57:

The slot machine 60 of Claim 2 is similar to that of Fig. 1 in all respects except that instead of pseudo spinning reels 42 carrying symbols 43, the video display 41 displays a hand of a card game comprising, for example, five cards 61 of a draw poker hand.

Therefore, since the card embodiment is similar "in all respects" to the slot embodiment, the game of Bennett would only pay for combinations including the wildcard symbol and would not pay for winning combinations that do not include the wildcard symbol after the wildcard symbol replaces one of the cards. Therefore, Bennett does not disclose, teach or suggest the step of providing an award for each winning playing card combination.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 23 and new Claims 29 and 30 that depend therefrom are patentably distinguished over the art of record and are in condition for allowance.

New Claim 31 is directed to a method for determining an award in a gaming device including a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding combinations of the symbols. The method includes the steps of randomly generating a first set of the symbols, and providing a player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in the first set. The method further includes selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol with one of the symbols, providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in the second set including all award yielding symbol combinations in the second set regardless of whether an award was provided for such award yielding combinations in the first set. For the reasons discussed above, the prior art of record does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the steps of Claim 31. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claim 31 is patentably distinguished over the art of record and is in condition for allowance.

New Claim 32 A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding combinations of the symbols. The method includes the steps of generating a set of the symbols, wherein one of said symbols in the set is a first wild symbol, and providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in the set, wherein the wild symbol functions as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combination in the set. The method further includes individually substituting a second wild symbol for at least one but not all of the symbols in the set except for the first wild symbol, providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in the set, including each award yielding combination including the wild symbols and wherein each wild symbol functions as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combination in the set. For the reasons discussed above the prior art of record does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the steps of new Claim 32. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claim 32 is patentably distinguished over the art of record and is in condition for allowance.

New Claim 33 is directed to a method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of playing cards and a plurality of award yielding playing card combinations. The method includes the steps of generating a first set of playing cards, wherein at least one of the playing cards in the set is a wildcard, and providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination appearing in the set. The method further includes the method of causing any wildcard in the set to individually function as one of the playing cards in the set to maximize the award yielding playing card combinations, and providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination of the set, regardless of whether any award for said award yielding combination was provided to the player in the previous steps. For the reasons discussed above, the prior art of record does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the steps of Claim 33. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 33 is patentably distinguished over the art of record and is in condition for allowance.

Newly added Claim 34 includes a gaming device including a plurality of reels, a plurality of symbols on the reels including at least one wild symbol, a plurality of symbol combinations that each yield an award if generated by said reels, and a processor which controls the reels. The processor causes the reels to generate a set of the symbols. When one of said symbols in the set is one of the wild symbols, the processor provides an award for each award yielding symbol combination in the set, wherein the wild symbol functions as at least one other symbol. The processor then individually substitutes another wild symbol for one of the symbols in the set except for the wild symbol, and provides an award for each award yielding symbol combination in the set, regardless of whether the combination includes a wild symbol, and wherein each wild symbol functions as at least one symbol. For the reasons discussed above, the prior art of record does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the steps of Claim 34. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 34 is patentably distinguished over the art of record and is in condition for allowance.

New Claim 35 is directed to a gaming device including a processor, and a memory device which maintains a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding symbol combinations. The processor communicates with the memory device to generate a set of symbols, wherein one of said symbols is a wild symbol and provide an

award for each symbol combination appearing in the set, wherein said wild symbol functions as one of the symbols. The processor also communicates with the memory device to individually substitute another wild symbol for at least one but not all of the other non-wild symbols in the set, and provide an award for each symbol combination appearing in the set, wherein each wild symbol stands, functions as one of the symbols. For the reasons discussed above, the prior art of record does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the steps of Claim 35. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claim 35 is patentably distinguished over the art of record and is in condition for allowance.

New Claim 36 is directed to a gaming device including a processor and a memory device which maintains a plurality of playing cards and a plurality of award yielding playing card combinations. The processor communicates with the memory device to randomly generate a set of the playing cards, wherein one of the playing cards in the set is a wildcard, and provide an award for each award yielding playing card combination appearing in the set including the wildcard. The processor also communicates with the memory device to individually change said wildcard to one of the playing cards and to provide an award for each playing card combination appearing in the set, regardless of whether the processor previously provided an award for the playing card combinations and wherein the wildcard functions as one of the playing cards. For the reasons discussed above, the prior art of record does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the steps of Claim 36. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claim 36 is patentably distinguished over the art of record and is in condition for allowance.

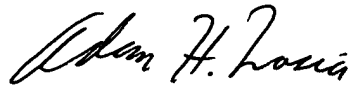
Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and Claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Versions with Markings to Show Changes Made.**"

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Applicants' attorney, Adam Masia, at (312) 807-4284 to discuss this Response.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY



Adam H. Masia
Reg. No. 35,602
P.O. Box 1135
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135
Phone: (312) 807-4214

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Specification:

Paragraph beginning at line 16 of page 3 has been amended as follows:

In known non-bonus gaming systems, i.e., in the base game having a plurality of reels, the games evaluate the effect of a wild symbol one time. Thus, if a wildcard creates a new winning combination on a payline of a known slot machine, wherein the payline already contains a winning combination separate and apart from the new winning combination via the wildcard, the known slot machine will pay the separate winning combination once and the new combination once via the wild symbol. That is, in known Known games, the thus spins the reels spin, any winning pay-out the combinations are paid, and the change non-wild symbols to wild symbols produce additional pays and pay out the combinations which include the changed symbols. The games, however, They do not perform a total re-evaluation and pay all combinations again.

Paragraph beginning at line 1 of page 14 has been amended as follows:

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40 are ~~is~~ generally referred to herein as the "computer" or the "controller."

Paragraph beginning at line 12 of page 16 has been amended as follows:

Fig. 5A also includes a preferably randomly generated wild symbol 110 shown as a "W" on reel 34b and payline 56a. Fig. 5B illustrates that the game of the present example maintains a feature whereby the randomly appearing wild symbol 110 on the central display device 30, as indicated by Fig. 5A, in turn replaces or substitutes for every display symbol on the wild symbol's associated reel, 34b, ~~into a wild symbol~~, as indicated by Fig. 5B. The preferred method of the present invention evaluates the player's winnings, according to a predetermined payable, in two steps.

Paragraph beginning at line 17 of page 20 has been amended as follows:

Referring to Figs. 9A and 9B, one preferred method of the present invention is illustrated in a slot machine embodiment, wherein a preferably randomly generated wild symbol 110 on a central display device 30 replaces one or more, but not all, non-wild displayed symbols on a row and reel associated with or containing the wild symbol 110. Figs. 9A and 9B include five reels 34a through 34e and three paylines 56a through 56c. Fig. 9B illustrates a wild symbol on reel 34b and payline 56c replacing a one-bar symbol on the same position in Fig. 9A. Fig. 9B also illustrates a wild symbol on reel 34c and payline 56a replacing a three-bar symbol on the same position in Fig. ~~9A~~ 8A. The present invention contemplates a symbol replacement on the top, bottom, left or right of the preferably randomly generated wild symbol 110. The symbol replacement is preferably but does not have to be adjacent to the generated wild symbol 110. The embodiment of Figs. 9A and 9B contemplates any number, less than all, of displayed symbol replacements on an associated row and reel.

Paragraph beginning at line 1 of page 26 has been amended as follows:

The draw poker game preferably contains ~~contain~~ one or more card exchanges, wherein the game enables the player to keep certain cards and discard others. That is, the player can for example keep a pair of kings and a wildcard and discard a four and a two. The game will issue two new replacement cards. The game can then enable another card exchange. The evaluation method applies to a draw poker game having a card exchange the same as described above. After the game enables the player to exchange cards, the game employs the evaluation sequence by: (i) providing an award for winning card combinations present before activating or equating the wildcard; and (ii) providing an award for winning card combinations present after activating or equating the wildcard.

Paragraph beginning at line 19 of page 27 has been amended as follows:

In the second step evaluation, the player again wins 50 credits for obtaining three cherry symbols along payline 56a, 100 credits for the heart-heart-cherry combination on reels 34a, 34b and 34c of payline 56b and 10 more credits for the heart-heart combination on reels 34b and 34c and payline 56c. The total for the second step evaluation is 160 credits and the total for the alternative slot machine embodiment round is 210 ~~220~~.

Paragraph beginning at line 12 of page 28 has been amended as follows:

Fig. 15A includes the initial hand 126 including an eight of diamonds, a two of spades, a two of hearts, an ace of clubs and an ace of diamonds. In the first evaluation of the alternative embodiment, the player receives five credits for the two of a kind two's and five credits for the two of a kind ace's, according to Fig. 12, for a total of 10 credits. For ~~in~~ the second evaluation every ace is replaced by an eight of the same suit. The ace of clubs changes to the eight of clubs and the ace of diamonds changes to the eight of diamonds. The ~~the~~ player therefore receives 50 credits for a full house eight's over two's, according to Fig. 12. The game contemplates enabling two of the same card to exist in one hand at the same time, e.g., two eight of diamonds as illustrated in Fig. 15B. The player again preferably does not win constituent combinations in the poker embodiment. The total win for the alternative method poker embodiment is 60 credits.

In the Claims:

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for ~~determining an award in~~ operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a list of award-yielding ~~symbols and~~ symbol combinations of said plurality of symbols in a controller;

(b) randomly generating a ~~set~~ first set of the symbols from the plurality of symbols;

(c) providing an award for each ~~symbol and symbol combination of said list appearing in said set;~~ award-yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set;

(d) ~~replacing one or more symbols in said set~~ selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol in the first set with one of the plurality of symbols to generate a second set of the symbols; and

(e) providing an award for each ~~symbol and symbol combination of said list appearing in said set;~~ award-yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set regardless of whether said award yielding symbol combination in the second set appeared in the first set.

Claim 2 has been amended as follows:

2. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~generating a set of symbols includes randomly generating said set.~~
the step of selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set for individual replacement includes selecting at least one predetermined symbol for individual replacement.

Claim 3 has been amended as follows:

3. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~generating a set of the step of individually replacing the~~ symbols includes an animation of the symbols ~~used for the replacement of said symbols.~~
which are replaced.

Claim 4 has been amended as follows:

4. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~generating a set of symbols includes a second spinning of the symbols on a reel used for the replacement of said symbols.~~the gaming device is a slot machine having a plurality of reels, the symbols are on said plurality of reels and the step of individually replacing the symbols includes individually replacing the selected symbols without spinning the reels.

Claim 5 has been amended as follows:

5. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine and wherein generating a the first set of symbols includes generating a symbols from the plurality of symbols on a payline of a slot machine. at least one payline.

Claim 6 has been amended as follows:

6. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine and wherein generating a the first set of symbols includes generating a symbols from the plurality of symbols on a plurality of paylines of a slot machine.

Claim 7 has been amended as follows.

7. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein generating ~~a set of symbols~~ includes generating ~~a set of symbols in a bonus round of a gaming device.~~ the first set of symbols and second set of symbols is part of a bonus game.

Claim 8 has been amended as follows:

8. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein generating ~~a set of symbols~~ includes generating ~~a plurality of playing cards and replacing one or more symbols~~ includes replacing ~~one or more of said playing cards.~~ the symbols are playing cards.

Claim 9 has been amended as follows:

9. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing ~~one or more symbols in said~~ each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for ~~one or more of said symbols, and wherein said wild symbol stands in the place of one or more symbols on said list.~~ at least one selected symbol in the first set, and wherein each wild symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 10 has been amended as follows:

10. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing ~~one or more symbols in said~~ each selected symbol of the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for ~~one or more of said symbols, and wherein said wild symbol stands in the place of every symbol on said list.~~ at least two selected symbols in the first set, and wherein each said wild symbol sequentially functions as at least one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 11 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 12 has been amended as follows:

12. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~replacing one or more symbols in said the gaming device~~ is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols on said reels, wherein when the first set includes a wild symbol, the step of replacing each selected symbol includes individually replacing one of the other symbols on the reels, wherein said wild symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 13 has been amended as follows:

13. (Amended) The method of Claim 12, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for ~~at least one symbol on a reel of a slot machine, and wherein said wild symbol stands in the place of at least one symbol on said list~~ a plurality of symbols on one of said reels, wherein each said wild symbols function as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 14 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 15 has been amended as follows:

15. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~replacing one or more symbols in said the gaming device~~ is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols on the reels, and wherein when the first set of symbols includes a wild symbol, the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one ~~symbol on a reel of a~~ other of the symbols in a row of symbols of the reels of the slot machine, wherein said ~~slot machine generated said wild symbol on said reel as part of said set, and wherein said wild symbol stands in the place of at least one symbol on said list.~~ wild symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 16 has been cancelled without prejudice of disclaimer.

Claim 17 has been amended as follows:

17. (Amended) A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining in a controller of said gaming device a list of ~~symbols~~ and award yielding symbol combinations ~~that yield an award if generated by said gaming device~~ of said plurality of symbols;

(b) generating a set of said symbols, wherein one of said symbols in said set is a first wild symbol;

(c) providing an award for each award yielding symbol ~~and symbol combination of said list~~ appearing in said set, ~~wherein said wild symbol stands in the place of at least one symbol on said list; substituting said wild symbol for one or more symbols in said set~~ including the generated wild symbol which functions as one of the other symbols to maximize the award yielding combinations;

(d) selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the set except for the first wild symbol in the set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol with a second wild symbol; and

(e) providing an award for each award yielding symbol ~~and symbol combination of said list~~ appearing in said set, ~~wherein each wild symbol stands in the place of at least one symbol on said list~~ including the wild symbols which replace other symbols and functions as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations.

Claim 18 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 19 has been amended as follows:

19. (Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the ~~generating a set of symbols includes randomly generating said set.~~ The method of Claim 17, wherein substituting said wild symbol for one or more symbols in said set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol on a reel of a slot machine, said reel including selected symbol on the reel which includes said generated wild symbol.

Claim 20 has been amended as follows:

20. (Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein ~~substituting said wild symbol for one or more symbols in said~~ the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol on a of one row of symbols of a slot machine, on the reels, wherein said row ~~including~~ which includes said generated wild symbol.

Claim 21 has been amended as follows:

21. (Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein ~~substituting said wild symbol for one or more symbols in said~~ the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol on a reel one of the reels and at least one symbol on a row one of the rows of symbols of a slot machine, on the reels, wherein said reel and said row ~~including~~ include said generated wild symbol.

Claim 22 has been amended as follows:

22. (Amended) The method of Claim 17, wherein ~~substituting said wild symbol for one or more symbols in said~~ the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one other particular symbol of said gaming device.~~predetermined generated symbol.~~

Claim 23 has been amended as follows:

23. (Amended) A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of playing cards, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining in a controller of said gaming device a list of ~~playing cards and~~ award yielding playing card combinations ~~that yield an award if generated by said gaming device;~~

(b) generating a set of playing cards, wherein one of said playing cards in said set is a ~~wildcard~~ wild card;

(c) providing an award for each ~~playing card and~~ award yielding playing card combination ~~of said list appearing in said set, including said wildcard and combinations including said wildcard appearing on said list; equating said wildcard to one or more playing cards in said set;~~ including said generated wildcard which functions as one of the cards to maximize the award yielding combinations in said set;

(d) selecting at least one but not all of the cards in the set except for said wildcard for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected playing card with another wildcard; and

(e) providing an award for each ~~playing card and~~ award yielding playing card combination ~~of said list appearing in said set, wherein each wildcard stands in the place of one or more playing cards on said list.~~ in said set including the wildcards which function as one of the playing cards to maximize the award yielding combinations.

Claim 24 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

New Claims 25 to 36 has been added.